

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02

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R 151100Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6713

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR UR NP

SUBJ: SOVIET-NEPALESE RELATIONS ON EVE OF

KING'S MOSCOW VISIT

1. HIS MAJESTY KING BIRENDRA DEPARTS FOR MOSCOW NOVEMBER 16
IN AN EFFORT TO REVIVE SOVIET ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO NEPAL.
WE WOULD EXPECT SOVIETS TO AGREE TO SOME DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS,
PROBABLY ON LONG TERM LOAN BASIS, FIRST SUCH ASSISTANCE FOR
NEARLY FOUR YEARS.

2. NEPALESE HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WILL REQUEST SOVIET
ASSISTANCE TO BUILD BEGETABLE OIL FACTORY, PHARMACEUTICAL
FACILITY AND PAPER MILL, AMONG OTHER PROJECTS. SOVIETS, IN
TURN, HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY WILL "LISTEN SYMPATHETICALLY"
BUT ARE QUICK TO STRESS THAT THEIR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC
INTERESTS IN NEPAL ARE LIMITED. THEY HAVE EXPRESSED SOME
WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN UNDERTAKING NEW MINERAL
RESOURCES SURVEY IN NEPAL AND IN PROVIDING SOME TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE IN GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, INCLUDING MAPPING. WE
WOULD EXPECT THAT KING WILL NOT RETURN EMPTY HANDED FROM
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MOSCOW BUT THAT SOVIETS WILL RESIST ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN GRANT

ASSISTANCE.

3. POLITICALLY, NEPALESE REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT THEY CAN OBTAIN SOME STATEMENT SUPPORTIVE OF KING'S PROPOSAL THAT NEPAL BE DECLARED "ZONE OF PEACE". ALTHOUGH SOVIET DELEGATE TO KING'S 1975 CORONATION WAS QUICK TO SUPPORT PROPOSAL, HE DID SO WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS AND SINCE THAT TIME SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES HAVE SHIED AWAY FROM THE SUBJECT, ESPECIALLY SINCE INDIANS SEE IDEA AS BLATANTLY ANTI-INDIAN INITIATIVE.

4. AT SAME TIME MANY GOVERNMENT AND PALACE ADVISORS ARE HESITANT TO EXPAND CLOSE TIES WITH NEW DELHI. THEY CONTINUE TO EXPRESS FEAR THAT INCREASED SOVIET PRESENCE IN NEPAL WILL WORK TO INDIA'S INTEREST AND THAT SOVIETS WILL ONLY SERVE AS INDIAN STALKING HORSE IN NEPAL. WHILE THIS IS NO DOUBT AN OVERSTATEMENT OF SOVIET ROLE, NEPALESE ARE CLEARLY SKEPTICAL ABOUT WHAT SOVIETS CAN PROVIDE AND RECOGNIZE THAT OVERRIDING SOVIET INTEREST IN SOUTH ASIA LIES WITH INDIA, NOT NEPAL.

5. IT IS UNCLEAR (EVEN TO NEPALESE) WHETHER KING WILL MEET BREZHNEV. CHIEF PALACE ADVISOR CHIRAN THAPA COMPLAINED TO EMBOFF LAST WEEK THAT GON HAD NOT EVEN RECEIVED REPLY TO DRAFT AGENDA FORWARDED TO MOSCOW SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. FAILURE OF BREZHNEV TO RECEIVE KING WOULD BE SERIOUS BLOW TO NEPALESE PRESTIGE AND WOULD NOT SIT WELL WITH KING PERSONALLY, THE MORE SO AFTER HIS LENGTHY AND WARM RECEPTION IN SZECHUAN BY CHINESE PREMIER HUA-FENG IN JUNE.

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